

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. An image capturing apparatus, comprising:

an imaging system including a lens and an imaging device, the lens forming an image of a subject on a light receiving surface of the imaging device, the imaging device converting the image of the subject to an electronic image signals;

a display unit that displays an image in accordance with signals captured through the imaging device;

a photometry device that determines a luminance of the subject;

an automatic exposure control device that automatically adjusts exposure of the imaging system in accordance with the luminance of the subject determined by the photometry device;

a gradation area dividing device that processes the electronic image signals read from the imaging device so as to divide, according to predetermined luminance thresholds, an image obtained by an image-capturing through the imaging system into areas of gradations coarser than gradations in the image-capturing;

a color-coding device that generates an image signal representing a gradation area divided image by applying the same color to at least one area in the same luminance range in the image obtained by the image-capturing so that the areas of gradations divided by the gradation area dividing device are visually distinguished, the display unit receiving the image signal generated by the color-coding device and displaying the gradation area divided image;

a luminance range designating device that designates one of the gradations in the gradation area divided image displayed on the display unit;

a correcting device that corrects at least one of exposure control of the automatic exposure device and image data obtained with the exposure control so as to obtain a correct exposure for the one of the gradations designated by the

luminance range designating device; and

a recording device that records the image data corrected by the correcting device.

2. The image capturing apparatus as defined in claim 1, wherein the color-coding device gives different colors to the gradation areas divided by the gradation area dividing device.

3. The image capturing apparatus as defined in claim 1, further comprising:
a contour sampling device that samples a contour of the subject from the image captured by the imaging device,

wherein the image display unit displays the area of gradation color-coded by the color-coding device and the contour of the subject.

4. The image capturing apparatus as defined in claim 1, wherein the luminance range designating device is constructed in such a manner as to select one color from color samples displayed on a screen of the image display unit.

5. The image capturing apparatus as defined in claim 2, wherein the luminance range designating device is constructed in such a manner as to select one color from color samples displayed on a screen of the image display unit.

6. An automatic exposure correcting method, comprising the steps of:
imaging by automatically controlling exposure of an imaging system including an imaging device in accordance with results of photometry;

dividing an image acquired by the imaging step according to predetermined luminance thresholds, and dividing the image into areas of gradations coarser than gradations in the imaging step;

displaying, on an image display unit, a gradation area divided image in which the same luminance range is given the same color so that the divided areas of gradations can be distinguished visually;

selecting one of the gradations in the gradation area divided image displayed on the display unit;

correcting one of exposure control of an automatic exposure control device and image data acquired by the exposure control so as to obtain a correct exposure for the one of the gradations selected in the selecting step; and

recording the image data acquired by the correcting.